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Heart-Shaped Brooches.

By M. Kindlam.

Among the historical and ethnographical breast-ornaments of Estonia, the heart-shaped brooches form a group to themselves. Their characteristic feature is a closed, comparatively natural, heart-shaped brooch, the upper part of

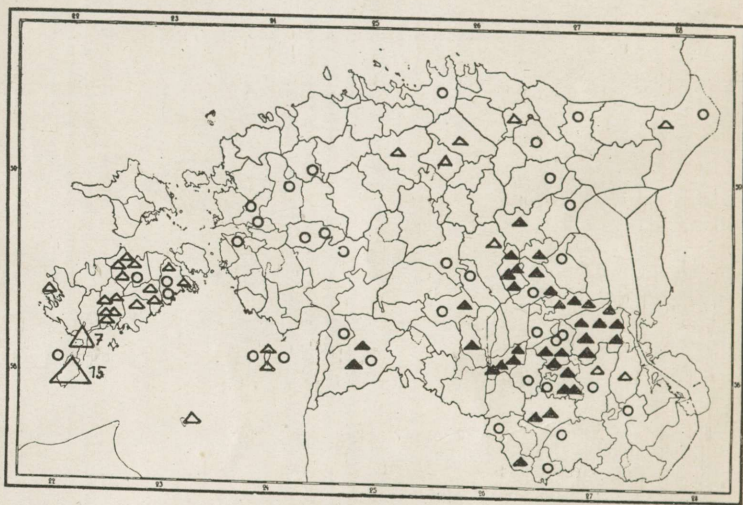


Fig. 1. The distribution of heart-shaped brooches in Estonia.

- ▲ Historical heart-shaped brooches.
- △ Ethnographic heart-shaped brooches.
- The answers of correspondents.

which usually forms a crown or some variation of that shape. The most usual and frequent names of those brooches are *prees* (also *rees*, *ries*) and *sõlg*, less frequently *preesis* (in Jämaja), *rinnapreesike* (in Pilstvere), *pross* (behind Narva, in Rõuge), *pruss* (in

Äksi), *sõluke* (in Kaarma, in Torma). On the island of Ruhno they are called *krünšälja*. For the composition of this article, 94 heart-shaped brooches were examined — 50 from the collections of the Estonian National Museum, 41 from the collections of the University Archaeological Cabinet, 2 from the collections of the Estonian Literary Society in Tallinn and 1 from the collections of the Museum of Art in Tallinn¹. Besides that, there have been taken into consideration the answers of correspondents to questionnaire No. 10 of the Estonian National Museum². The older brooches, chiefly found in ancient burial-places, are in the collections of the Archaeological Cabinet while most of those collected in the last and present century are in the Estonian National Museum.

These heart-shaped brooches were used generally and most frequently to fasten chemise-fronts and neckerchiefs. Men also have used them, according to information from Rõuge, Kambja, Pilstvere, Nõo, Martna, Kanepi, Vigala, Nissi, Viru-Jaagupi, Kullamaa, Põlva and Pöide. In Pöide the men used them for fastening their neckcloths, the women for fastening the fronts of their chemises³. In Martna the opposite was the case⁴. In Vigala the richer women used to wear three neckerchiefs, one over the other, each fastened with a heart-shaped brooch of a different form⁵. In Kullamaa the coats of the men used to be fastened at the chest with a heart-shaped brooch⁶. The women of Äksi used the *pruss* to fasten together the corners of the kerchief under the chin⁷ and in some places these brooches

¹ Abbreviations used for collections: ERM = Estonian National Museum; Ark. K. = Archaeological Cabinet; EmKÜ = Estonian Literary Society, Tallinn.

² The abbreviation used for the file containing these answers is: ERM, kl. 10.

³ ERM, kl. 10, 12.

⁴ ERM, kl. 10, 19.

⁵ ERM, kl. 10, 47.

⁶ ERM, kl. 10, 55.

⁷ ERM, kl. 10, 7.

were used to fasten the sleeves to the breast-opening ¹. In Karja they were used to fasten shirt-fronts ².

The historical heart-shaped brooches are mostly made of copper and bronze, the ethnographic ones are most frequently made of silver, though also of copper and nickel; some of the copper brooches are silver-plated. No gold brooches are found in the collections although, according to reports from correspondents, there used to be such in Kihnu, Vigala, Kanepi, Nissi and Pärnu-Jaagupi. In Vigala ³ and Nissi ⁴ they used to be worn only by estate owners, but in other places also by peasants. According to information from Vigala ⁵, Martna ⁶ and Karula ⁷ there were also heart-shaped brooches made of bone and in the parish of Viljandi they were made even from twigs ⁸. The brooches were usually acquired in the nearest town where they were manufactured for sale by goldsmiths, though they could be ordered to suit one's taste and wishes. In the market-town of Lihula only the simpler brooches could be bought ready-made; better ones had to be ordered ⁹. Heart-shaped brooches could also be obtained at the fairs and in some places peddlers went about the villages selling them ¹⁰. In the parish of Viljandi heart-shaped brooches from copper and even twigs were made ¹¹, though there is another report about the village smith of Viljandi who made them of silver-roubles ¹². Also in Haeska, in the parish of Martna, there was a village goldsmith who manufactured such brooches ¹³.

¹ ERM, kl. 10, 54, 53, 16.

² ERM, kl. 10, 64.

³ ERM, kl. 10, 47.

⁴ ERM, kl. 10, 50.

⁵ ERM, kl. 10, 47.

⁶ ERM, kl. 10, 19.

⁷ ERM, kl. 10, 68.

⁸ ERM, kl. 10, 52.

⁹ ERM, kl. 10, 35.

¹⁰ ERM, kl. 10, 2.

¹¹ ERM, kl. 10, 52.

¹² ERM, kl. 10, 4.

¹³ ERM, kl. 10, 19.

Heart-shaped brooches used to be worn by peasants as well as by estate owners and townsfolk. In some places this type of brooch was used chiefly as an ornament for church and holiday dresses, in other places it was put to practical uses and were worn every day for fastening dresses. It is interesting to note that in different places the presentation and wearing of heart-shaped brooches had their own meaning and purpose. They were generally used as engagement, courtship, or wedding presents. The young man bought and secretly gave a heart-shaped brooch to his bride-elect, who in this case lost the right to take back her promise ¹. Also various superstitions are known in connection with these heart-shaped brooches. On the estates in the parish of Maarja-Magdaleena, in the district of Kudina, women wearing heart-shaped brooches were supposed always to succeed in picking the wool while spinning. It was a wide-spread belief that a heart-shaped brooch protected one from all evil. It was supposed to be a good charm against the wrath of the estate-owner and guaranteed success in the law courts ³. In the parish of Viljandi such a brooch was supposed to give peaceful sleep and insure one against somnambulism as well as nightmares ⁴. In the parish of Karuse it was supposed to protect one against sorcerers and witches ⁵. In Põlva it was said to protect one from the evil eye ⁶. In Kihnu silver scraped from these brooches was added to medicines ⁷. In the parish of Nissi they were laid on wounded and sore places, especially on ulcers ⁸.

The size of these heart-shaped brooches, apart from their different forms, is fairly equal. The average length of the historical ones that have been measured is 37 mm., the

¹ ERM, kl. 10, 26.

² ERM, kl. 10, 66.

³ ERM, kl. 10, 18, 67.

⁴ ERM, kl. 10, 52.

⁵ ERM, kl. 10, 35.

⁶ ERM, kl. 10, 18.

⁷ ERM, kl. 10, 27.

⁸ ERM, kl. 10, 50.

average breadth 25 mm.; the length of the biggest is 45 mm., the breadth 27 mm., and the smaller respectively 30 mm. and 20 mm. The average length of the ethnographic heart-shaped

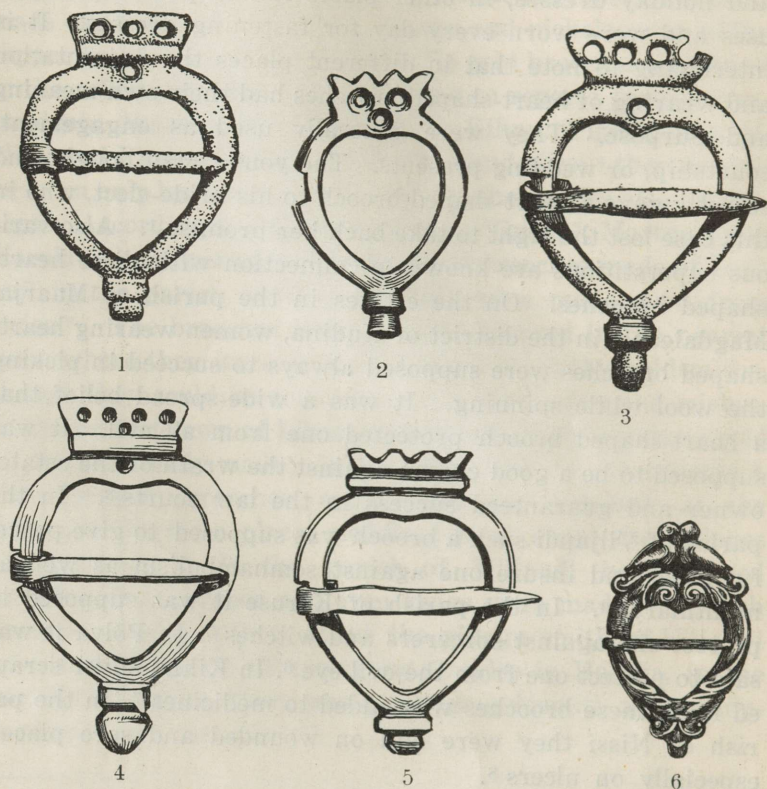


Fig. 2. Historical Heart-Shaped Brooches: 1. Ark. K. 2808:6 from Kursi, bronze; 2. Ark. K. 2513:86 from Hargla, bronze; 3. Ark. K. 1036 from Kursi, bronze; 4. Ark. K. 2256:13 from Rõngu, bronze; 5. Ark. K. 1091:2 from Kambja, bronze; 6. Ark. K. 597 from Laiuse, bronze. Ca $\frac{1}{1}$.

ed brooches is 34 mm., the breadth 23 mm., the bigger sizes being respectively 45 mm. and 26 mm., and smaller ones — 23 mm. and 20 mm.

These heart-shaped brooches have been obtained chiefly from Saaremaa, Tartumaa and the northern parts of Võrumaa, while from Western Estonia, excepting the parish of

Saarde, there is not even one specimen in the collections. From the islands only the ethnographic heart-shaped brooches have been obtained, the historical ones coming chiefly from the South of Estonia (fig. 1). The confinement of the distribution of the historical heart-shaped brooches to the South of Estonia is partly explained by the fact that the older collections, acquired by the Archaeological Cabinet from the Learned Estonian Society, have mostly been completed on this basis¹. The distribution area of the ethnographic brooches has been noticeably enlarged by the data obtained from correspondents, so that we may consider it as embracing the whole of Estonia, excepting Setumaa, from which there is not one of this type of brooch in the collections and from which the answers of correspondents are also negative. Thus, the distribution map of these brooches, formed only on the basis of the material found in the museums, is definitely changed by the information sent in answer to the questionnaire referred to previously.

As mentioned above, there are in the collections historical as well as ethnographical brooches. The historical brooches mostly have a thick, narrow bow, of which the upper part is in the form of a crown, while on the lower part is a button in profile. The crown is variously shaped — its upper border is smooth or indented, with either blunt or undulating teeth (see fig. 2:1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The crown is adorned with a characteristic perforation, the traces of which, in some brooches, are only impressed holes. The number of holes or pits in the crown varies from 1 to 5; besides those, there are holes or imprints also on the upper part of the bow under the crown. In some cases the pits are impressed on the whole bow. The brooch with perforated holes, Ark. K. 2808:4, belongs at latest to the XVII century. The abovenamed brooch was found in a grave in the parish of Kursi, where it was excavated together with bones, horseshoe brooches, bronze rings and

¹ See: Tartu Ülikool sõnas ja pildis [Tartu University in Word and Picture] 1919—1932 (Tartu 1932) fig. 64.

coins of the years 1518—1683. In the collections there are pitted brooches dated the XVII and XVIII centuries. Some of the historical brooches are without holes and pits. The establishing of their date was made possible only by Ark. K. 1261:3 which was found in the parish of Kanepi together with coins of the XVII century.

As mentioned above, the upper border of the crown is either smooth or indented. Although the type with a realistic, serrated border on the crown appears to be older, the present data show that in this country the type with a smooth upper border on the crown, the serrated type, the type with a perforated crown as well as the type without perforations occurred simultaneously from the XVI to the XVIII century. On some brooches the crown has three branches (cp. fig. 4:8). On Archaeological Cabinet exhibit No. 1460 :3 it is divided into two leaf-shaped forms. A peculiarity of this brooch is a broader than usual pin on which is imprinted a vein. On brooch Ark. K. 676 the crown is transformed into a triangle with toothed sides. Among the historical brooches Ark. K. 597 (fig. 2:6) and Ark. K. 1091:4 are unusual. Here on the upper part of the bow are two birds facing each other. As is shown further on, the brooches with birds form a group by themselves among the ethnographic heart-shaped brooches.

The ethnographic heart-shaped brooches differ from the historical ones not only in the material, which in most cases is silver, but chiefly in the form of the crown (cp. brooches in figs. 2, 3, 4 and 5) and also in the fact that we very seldom find them with the underneath button which is so characteristic of the historical brooches.

Those, the upper part of the crown of which is bow-shaped, form one subdivision of the ethnographic brooches. On brooch ERM 6074 (fig. 4:4) the crown is divided into several branches; on some brooches the bow-line is undulating (fig. 4:5), though the typical later step forms a crown with a smooth upper border (fig. 4:6). Those brooches mostly have a narrow bow and are comparatively

small. The exhibits in the ERM are all from Saaremaa, though their appearance is remembered also in Põlva, Pärnu-Jaagupi, Kanepi, beyond Narva, Hargla, Kolga-Jaani, Saarde, Viljandi, Karula and Maarja-Magdaleena.



Fig. 3. Ethnographic Heart-Shaped Brooch from Jämaja, made of some kind of light-coloured metal. ERM 5956. $\frac{1}{1}$.

For ornament they have either impressed pits or raised points on their crowns; some have on the lower edge of the crown a rudimentary bunch of rays where formerly there used to be a hole (cp. fig. 4:5 and 4:6). The data in the catalogue state that those brooches were in use in the first half of the last century.

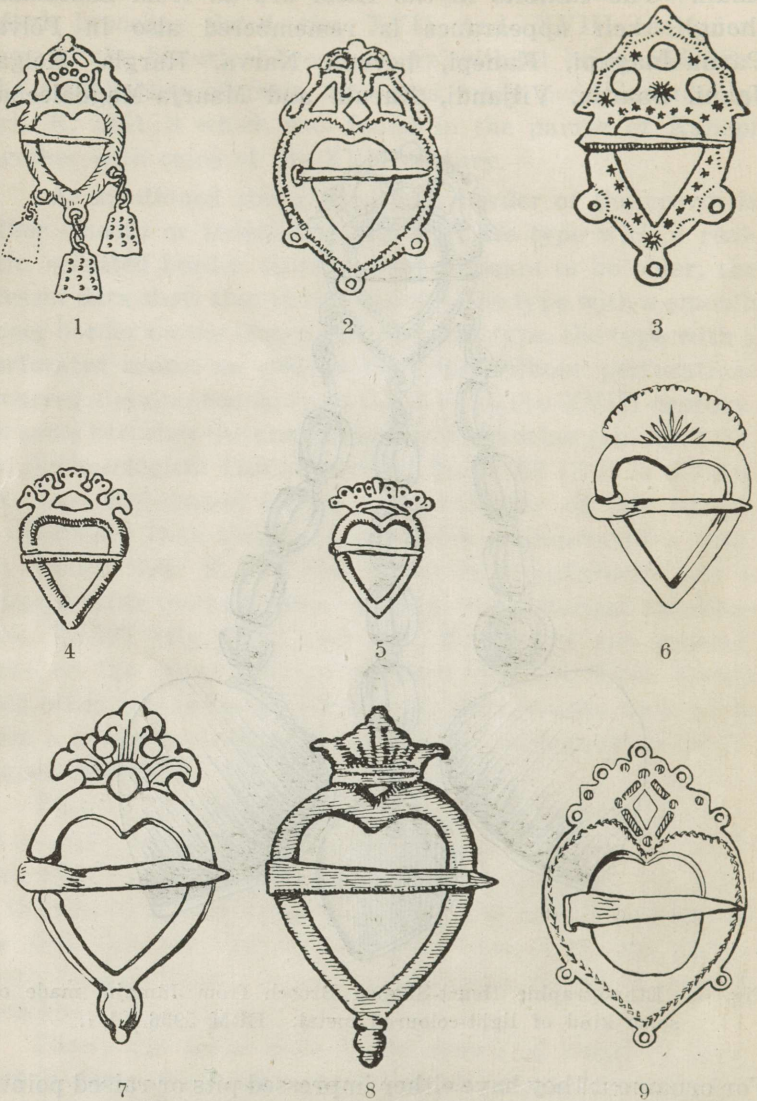


Fig. 4. Ethnographic Heart-Shaped Brooches: 1. ERM 6075 from Jämaja, silver; 2. ERM 16705 from Kaarma, silver; 3. ERM 12503 from Jämaja, nickel; 4. ERM 6074 from Jämaja, silver; 5. ERM 5952 from Jämaja, silver; 6. ERM 16855 from Karja, silver; 7. ERM A112:65 from Põltsamaa, silver; 8. ERM 4478 from Põlva, silver; 9. ERM 11203 from Valjala, copper. Ca $\frac{1}{1}$.

Those, on the upper part of which are birds, form a second distinctive subdivision among the ethnographic brooches. These have a broad, thin bow on the sides and

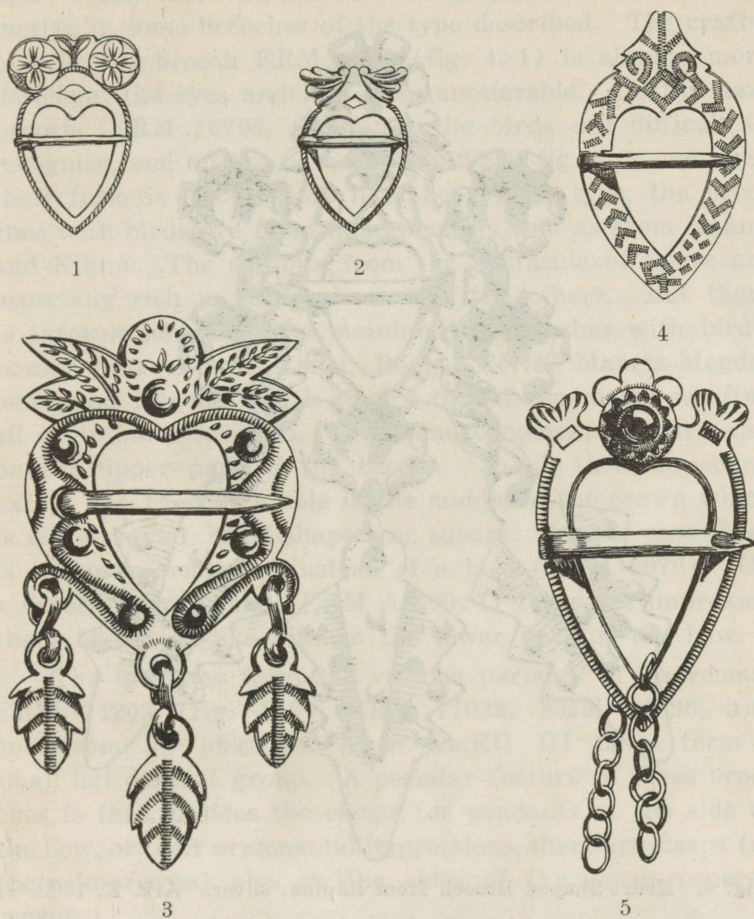


Fig. 5. Ethnographic Heart-Shaped Brooches: 1. ERM A 316:539 from Anseküla, silver; 2. ERM A 316:538 from Anseküla, silver; 3. ERM 6029 from Anseküla, silver; 4. ERM A 316:536 from Anseküla, silver; 5. ERM 634 from Järva-Madise, silver. Ca $\frac{1}{1}$.

lower part on which are clasps to fasten pendants with. On the other hand the bow of the above-mentioned historical brooch with birds is thick and without clasps for fastening

pendants (fig. 2:6). Pendants fastened to three clasps are either small oval, or trapezoid metal leaves ornamented with points in relief, or large heart-shaped glass-orna-

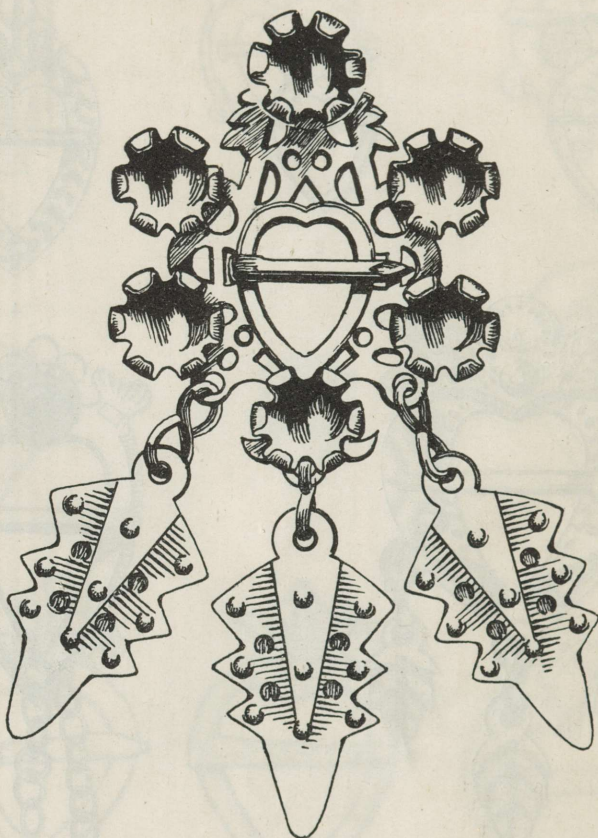


Fig. 6. Heart-Shaped Brooch from Rápina, silver. Ark. K. 130. $\frac{1}{1}$.

ments tied to glass-bead chains (fig. 3). In Maarja-Magdaleena in the district of Kudina the pendants were three coins, which hung on a chain made from the hair of a corpse¹. Those which are formed most truly to nature have to be considered the typical starting point of the group

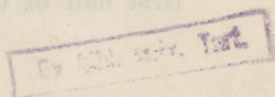
¹ ERM, kl. 10, 66.

of brooches with birds (fig. 3). The birds touch the crown with their beaks and their eyes and feet are to be seen. Later, or simultaneously with the abovementioned naturalistic form, there appeared a degenerate form of this motive in some brooches of the type described. The craftsmanship of brooch ERM 6075 (fig. 4:1) is already more deficient, the eyes and legs are unnoticeable. On the next brooch (ERM 16705, fig. 4:2) the birds are difficult to recognise, and on the next (ERM 12503, fig. 4:3) not even their form is left¹. Just like the former type, the brooches with birds are from Saaremaa, as well as from Ruhnu and Kihnu. The exhibits from the peninsula of Sõrve are especially rich in comparison with the others. But there is information from the mainland of brooches with birds, namely from Vigala, Äksi, Rõuge, Põlva, Maarja-Magdaleena and Karula. With regard to the ornaments we find all their bows serrated. The same ornament appears also on the upper part of the brooch. In all these brooches, except one, there is a hole in the middle of the crown which is either round, heart-shaped, or square. In one case there is a flower ornament instead of a hole (ERM 6076). On a brooch from Ruhnu (ERM A 300:1) there are impressed three half-moon-like pits on the lower part of the bow.

The brooches from the various parishes of Saaremaa, ERM 11203 (fig. 4:9), ERM 17032, ERM 11396, and one from an unknown place EmKÜ III 65 a, form a small but distinct group. A peculiar feature of these brooches is that, besides the clasps for pendants at the side of the bow, or their ornamental impressions, there are clasps (or their impresses) also on the sides of the sharp-cornered crown.

Of the isolated heart-shaped brooches Ark. K. 130 from Röpina (fig. 6) deserves most attention. This is a mixed form of the heart-shaped brooch and the flat, round brooch with eyes. The bow is pierced and broad, the inner edge

¹ Cp. I. Manninen Eesti rahvariiete ajalugu [The History of Estonian Dress] (Tartu 1932) 401—402.



is of a heart-shaped cut. On the bow are six hollows for the eyes. (The eyes themselves have been lost). Three big silver pendants shaped like oak-leaves and ornamented with knobs, holes and veins, are fastened to the clasps on the lower part of the bow.

The crown of the brooch from Järva-Madise, ERM 634 (fig. 5:5), is divided into three parts; to the centre branch is fastened a green glass bead. By the shape of their crowns as well as by their ornaments brooches ERM A 316:536 (fig. 5:4) and ERM 6029 (fig. 5:3) from Anseküla deserve attention. The first has for its crown a triangle with branched ends with its lower part leaf-shaped. The other has a leaf with long, sharp-ended branches. As ornament the first has a serrated border which appears in stripes in the bow, and as a square and a cross in the crown; the second has big, sparse knobs on the bow and one in the centre of the crown. ERM A 316:539 (fig. 5:1) is unique in the shape of its crown and its natural plant ornaments, forming two four-petalled flowers symmetrically placed in circles. We also see flower ornaments on the crown of brooch ERM A 316:538 (fig. 5:2), which is leaf-shaped. Brooch ERM A 112:65 (fig. 4:7) has three palms for its crown. On brooch ERM 11460, four broken lines, one under the other, are cut into the crown. Brooch ERM 11108 is the only one among the material investigated, which consists of a simple heart-shaped bow without a crown. Also a brooch with birds, ERM 10217, has no crown.

As regards the age of the heart-shaped brooches forming the material for the present article, it is impossible to place them at an earlier date than the XVI century (see page 322). Of the ethnographic brooches, the oldest is ERM 10206 from Pöide and, according to the catalogue, it belongs to the middle of the XVIII century. The bow of this brooch is like the one in fig. 4:9, but its upper border resembles the upper border of the brooch in fig. 4:5. Most of the ethnographic brooches belong to the first half of the last century. They disappeared from use

in different places at different times from thirty to a hundred years ago. The heart-shaped brooches were evidently worn longest in Jämäja where they went out of fashion only ten or fifteen years ago¹. It is reported from the parish of Põlva in the district of Peri that even now school-children wear heart-shaped brooches².

We find parallels to our heart-shaped brooches almost in all the Baltic countries, such as Finland³, Latvia⁴, Sweden⁵, Norway⁶, Denmark⁷, Germany⁸ and Poland⁹. As the material is, for the most part, incomplete, it is still too early to say anything definite about the origin and distribution in the various countries. So far as the present material is concerned, and from what Mr. E. Laid, M. A., who is investigating the historical and the ethnographical ornaments of the Baltic countries, has told me, the heart-shaped brooches, compared to other national ornaments, play a minor part in Finland. It seems that in southern and eastern Finland they are closely related to the correspon-

¹ ERM, kl. 10, 13.

² ERM, kl. 10, 18.

³ U. T. Sirelius Suomen kansanpukujen historia (Helsinki 1915) 260, fig. 352; 261.

⁴ Latvju Raksti (Riga) tab. LIV 531, LIV 531 a, LIV 531 b: 5 and 6. — Data from V. Ginters, Esq., personally.

⁵ P. G. Vistrand Svenska folkdräkter (Stockholm 1907) 76, fig. 96; 86, fig. 103 and 104; 139, fig. 175. — Gerda Cederblom Svenska Allmogedräkter (Stockholm 1921) pl. VII: d, e; pl. XII: j; pl. XIV: e; pl. XV: a; pl. XVII: g; pl. XX: i; pl. XXII: g; pl. XXVI: i; pl. XXXI: j; pl. XXXIII: g; pl. XXXVIII: h; pl. XLIV: f; pl. XLVI: g. — S. Ambrosiani Bilder af Uttställda Föremål (Stockholm 1912) fig. 116, 119, 120.

⁶ Kristofer Visted Vor gamle Bondekultur (Kristiania 1923) 144, fig. 158. — Rikard Berge Norsk bondeylv (Risør 1925).

⁷ Data from E. Laid, Esq., M. A., personally.

⁸ Wilhelm Pessler Niedersächsisches Trachtenbuch (Hanover 1922) pl. XI, fig. 21: 4. — Edvin Redeslob Deutsche Volkskunst I (München 1923) fig. 102.

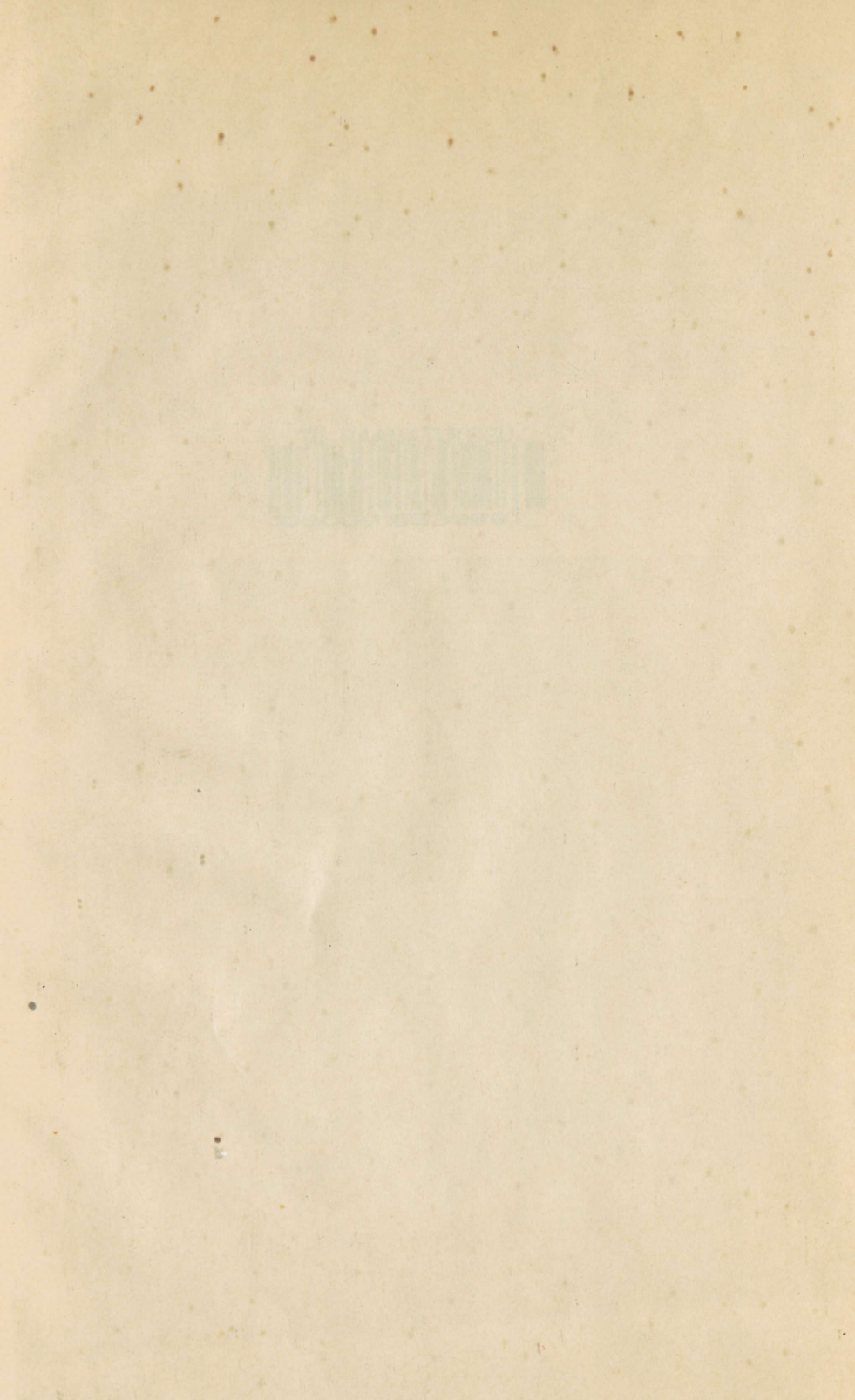
⁹ Włodzimierz Antoniewicz Metalowe spinki góralskie. Prace Komisji Etnograficznej Polskiej Akademji Umiejętności Nr. 8 (Krakow 1928) 19—41 and 49. — Peasant Art in Austria and Hungary. The Studio (London 1911) fig. 415—429.

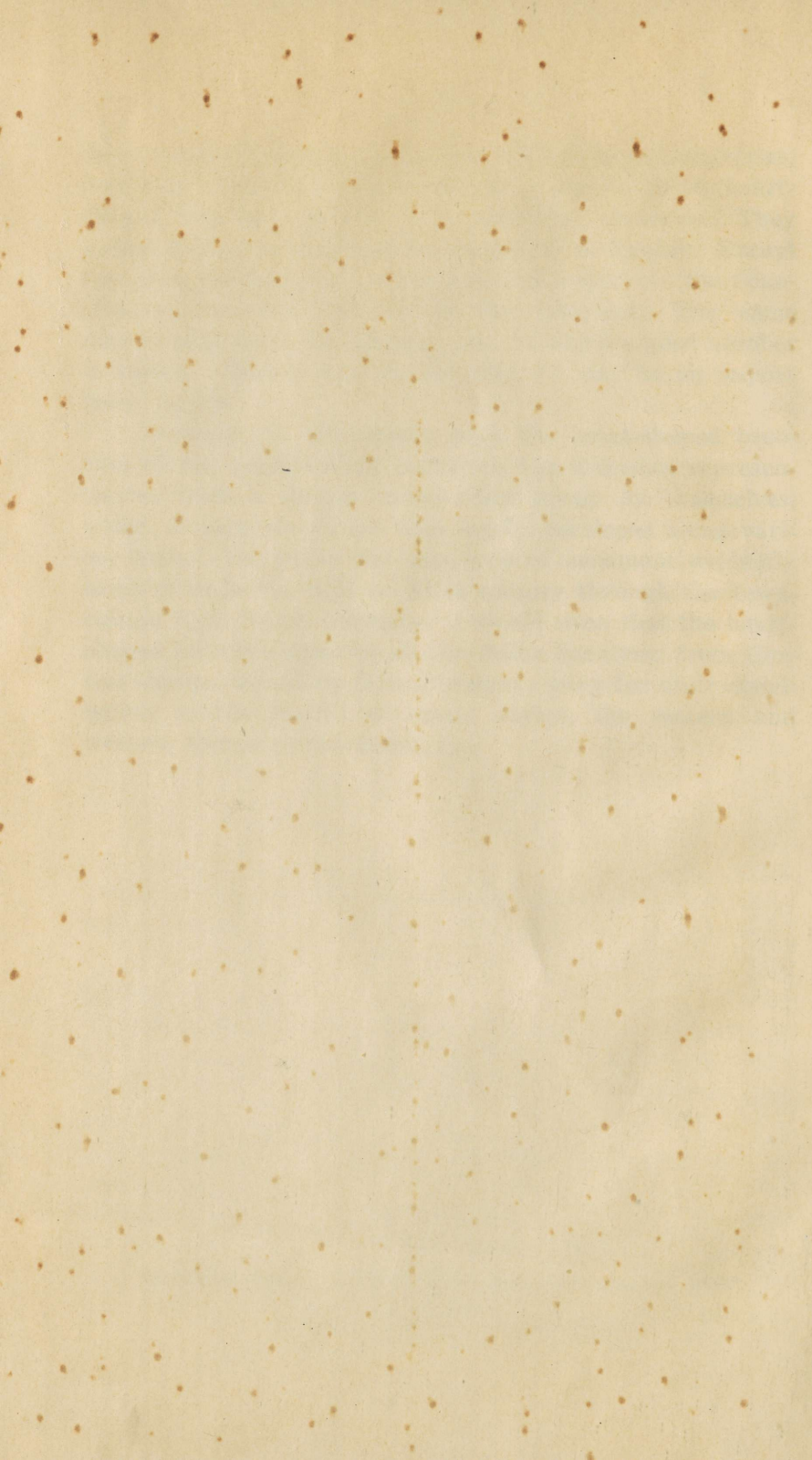
ding types in Estonia. In the Scandinavian countries, especially Sweden, in contrast to Finland, these heart-shaped brooches used to be a favourite ornament. They appear here in many groups, according to locality. Except for some isolated types — the form with birds — the Scandinavian brooches differ from the Estonian. The same may be said about the Latvian sorts, of which a good number is known. Brooch Ark. K. 130 (fig. 6) may be an import from Latvia.

Generally, in comparison with the heart-shaped brooches of the neighbouring countries, the Estonian representatives form a certain independent group by themselves, which, as seen above, has been locally developed along various lines. The model for this type of ornament evidently came to us in the XVI or XVII century through the town-culture from North Germany. It would seem that the heart-shaped brooches came to all the Baltic countries from Central Europe, especially from Germany, using for their distribution to the North two main routes, the eastern and western shores of the Baltic Sea.

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